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*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION RELEASES PUBLIC OPINION POLL

Nashville, Tenn. -- The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) has released the results of a public opinion survey measuring the opinions of Tennesseans with regard to higher education and the effects of the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program.

The completed survey was compiled by the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and included responses from 1,051 Tennesseans from all geographic regions, genders, ethnicities, ages and social backgrounds. Based on the information attained, an overwhelming 82% of parents in Tennessee would prefer their children attend a college or university after high school graduation.

While the majority of those polled expressed that they feel leaders in higher education are concerned with rising costs, those rising costs are not going unnoticed. Eighty-four percent of Tennesseans claim that the cost of higher education has risen sharply over the past five years. With regard to costs of higher education, 79% of Tennesseans surveyed claim that extra money needed to pay for state-supported colleges and universities should be funded by both state taxes and student fees.

Regardless of the personal support or opposition to the lottery, a majority of Tennesseans anticipate positive outcomes from the lottery scholarship program. Sixty-four percent of survey participants believe that the lottery program will result in more top students staying in Tennessee to complete their collegiate experience. More importantly, Tennesseans feel the lottery scholarship program provides an opportunity in post-secondary educational advancement. Nearly 90% of Tennesseans believe that the scholarship program will result in more students pursuing college that otherwise could not afford to attend.

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